

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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SUBJECT: INTERNAL POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

1. SUMMARY: DC CONGRESS POSTPONED FROM MAY 18-22 TO JUNE 6-10 WITH NO CHANGE IN PRE- CONGRESS PREPARATIONS. DEBATE CONTINUES IN DC ON EVENTUAL RESUMPTION OF DIALOGUE WITH SOCIALISTS. PSI OPTION FOR FRONTIST SOLUTION IN TWO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND OTHER ACTIONS HAVE NOT, HOWEVER, HELPED " PRO- DIALOGUE" FORCES. DESPITE PROBLEMS IN PARLIAMENT, ANDREOTTI GOVERNMENT CONTINUES SEEK INITIATIVE IN REFORMS OTHER AREAS. DIVORCE REFERENDUM POSTPONED UNTIL 1974. END SUMMARY.

2. CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS (DC) ANNOUNCED MARCH 7 THAT PARTY' S NATIONAL CONGRESS, PREVIOUSLY SCHEDULED FOR MAY 18-22, WOULD SLIP TO JUNE 6-10 SINCE ROME' S " PALACE OF CONGRESSES" HAD PRIOR BOOKING FOR EARLIER PERIOD. POSTPONEMENT WILL NOT AFFECT DEADLINES ALREADY SET FOR ELECTION OF DELEGATES TO NATIONAL CONGRESS BY REGIONAL PARTY CONGRESSES, NOW SCHEDULED FOR MAY 5-6. PRE- CONGRESS DEBATE AMONG PARTY' S NINE FACTIONS REMAINS UNDERSTANDABLY ACTIVE WITH SENATE PRESIDENT FANFANI' S APPEAL (ROME 1197) FOR EARLY RESUMPTION OF DIALOGUE AMONG ALL DEMOCRATIC PARTIES, INCLUDING SOCIALISTS, AS PRINCIPAL POINT OF DEPARTURE. TO DATE, DIALOGUE CALLED FOR BY FANFANI HAS NOT BEGUN. PARTY SECRETARY FORLANI, FOR EXAMPLE, IS REPORTED TO BE BEARISH ON EARLY RESUMPTION OF FORMAL DC- PSI DIALOGUE FOR FEAR

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OF NEGATIVE REACTION AT GRASSROOTS LEVEL IN DC. NEITHER HAVE OTHERS IN DC MAJORITY PICKED- UP AND RUN WITH BALL THROWN BY FANFANI. SENATE PRESIDENT HIMSELF, IN EXTENSIVE ROUND OF APPEARANCES BEFORE HIS FACTION' S FAITHFUL, HAS HASTENED TO DEFINE HIS INTEREST IN RENEWED DC- PSI DIALOGUE AS NOT MEANING HE ALSO NECESSARILY FAVORS EARLY RESTORATION OF CENTER- LEFT. HE HAS, FOR EXAMPLE, REPORTEDLY REMARKED THAT ANY NEW " MARRIAGE" BETWEEN THE DC AND PSI MUST HAVE " PARENTAL" (VOTERS') BACKING-- A BACKING WHICH ANDREOTTI AND HIS SUPPORTERS IN THE DC AND OTHER GOVERNMENT PARTIES FREQUENTLY AND PUBLICLY INSIST WOULD NOT BE FORTHCOMING.

3. FOR THEIR PART, SOCIALISTS CONTINUE MAKE THINGS DIFFICULT FOR PRO- CENTER- LEFT FORCES IN DC AND OTHER PARTIES. IN ADDITION TO JOINT ANTI- GOVERNMENT ACTIONS WITH PCI IN PARLIAMENT (SEE BELOW), PSI HAS CONTINUED ABRASIVE ACTIVITIES IN OTHER AREAS. AT LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEVEL, FOR EXAMPLE, SOCIALIST REGIONAL COMMITTEE HAS DECIDED TO BRING PSI INTO EMILIA- ROMAGNA REGIONAL GOVERNMENT WHERE PSI REALLY NOT NEEDED FOR STABILITY SINCE REGION ALREADY HAS ALL- COMMUNIST WORKING MAJORITY. WORSE YET, IN THE CITY OF PAVIA, SOCIALISTS HAVE OPTED TO FORM A FRONTIST MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT WITH COMMUNISTS WHEN A CENTER- LEFT ALLIANCE WOULD HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE. LOCAL PSI DECISIONS HAD EVEN MORE TELLING IMPACT SINCE THEY COUNTERED AGREEMENT REACHED IN ROME BETWEEN NATIONAL REPRESENTATIVES OF FOUR CENTER- LEFT PARTIES. DISCORD BETWEEN PSI AND ITS FORMER CENTER- LEFT PARTNERS SIMILARLY SOWN BY PARTY SECRETARY DE MARTINO' S PRAISE AT MARCH 8 PSI DIRECTORATE MEETING FOR CHILEAN ELECTION RESULTS AS INDICATION THAT SOCIALIST- COMMUNIST COLLABORATION DID NOT CREATE DANGERS OF AUTHORITAT- ITANISM BUT RATHER PERMITTED " DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT BASED ON LINES OF REAL PROGRESS".

4. MEANWHILE, NARROWNESS OF PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY CONTINUES PLAGUE GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS IN HOUSE AND SENATE. SOLID GOVERNMENT VICTORY MARCH 8 IN FAVORABLE CHAMBER ACTION ON LAW TO PROTECT VENICE WAS MARRED BY LOSS IN SEPARATE, SECRET BALLOT TO COALITION OF COMMUNISTS, SOCIALISTS AND SCATTERED " SNIPERS" FROM DC- LEFT ON ONE, RELATIVELY UNIMPORTANT ASECTION OF THE LAW. IT IS STILL UNCLEAR WHETHER OR NOT GOVERNMENT WILL SEEK CORRECTION WHEN VENICE LAW RECONSIDERED IN SENATE. GOVERNMENT FORCES WERE ALSO OUTVOTED, MARCH 9, IN SENATE WHERE COMMUNIST- SPONSORED AMENDMENT INCREASING AID TO SOUTHERN FLOOD VICTIMS WAS PASSED WITH SOCIALIST LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SUPPORT. GOVERNMENT SUBSEQUENTLY ACCEPTED OPPOSITION AMENDMENT.

5. DESPITE PARLIAMENTARY PITFALLS, ANDREOTTI CONTINUES INSIST HE WILL NOT BE BROUGHT DOWN ON OTHER THAN FORMAL VOTE OF CONFIDENCE. FURTHERMORE, IN ATTEMPT TO RETAIN INITIATIVE, GOVERNMENT HAS FORMALLY LAUNCHED BILL PROPOSING URGENT ASSISTANCE TO UNIVERSITIES AS WELL AS REFORM PROPOSALS FOR UNIVERSITY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL SYSTEMS. IN ANOTHER ACTION, CABINET AGREED MARCH 9 TO ACCEPT COUNCIL OF STATE JUDGMENT SUPPORTING LEGALITY OF HOLDING DIVORCE REFERENDUM IN 1974, NOT 1973.

6. COMMENT: WITH IMMEDIATE PROBLEM OF DIVORCE REFERENDUM OVERCOME, FORWARD MOTION ON REFORMS, AND RETICENCE IN DC AND OTHER GOVERNMENT FORCES TO BRING ANDREOTTI DOWN WITHOUT READY-MADE AND CREDIBLE SUCCESSOR, COMMONLY HELD THESIS IS STRENGTHENED THAT ANDREOTTI WILL LAST IN OFFICE AT LEAST UNTIL DC CONGRESS. ANDREOTTI'S VISIT TO UNITED STATES WILL, OF COURSE, ALSO INCREASE HIS STAYING POWER. VOLPE

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